

# Infant/Toddler Caregiver Tips - Managing Behavior

Behavior	Tip
<p><b>arching back, kicking, waving arms, irritable</b></p>	<p>Infant/toddler may be overstimulated. Focus on sensory input that is occurring in your environment. Consider removing hanging objects or very bright colors or patterns that may be adding too much visual stimulation. Evaluate your noise level, the smells and textures in your environment. Check the child's temperature. Is he cold? Is he wrapped or dressed too warm? Does the child appear to be in pain? Do a quick overall check for insect bites, bruises, or other injuries, or allergic reactions.</p>
<p><b>biting</b></p>	<p>Consider the following: Provide clean and safe mouthing objects by rotating and cleaning toys, and keep teething toys in every room; serve small bits of frozen vegetables from the freezer to your teething toddlers; give lots of attention throughout the day; model other ways to get attention; reinforce positive social behavior; reassure the child that he is safe; offer numerous toys of the same kind; try to catch frustration before it rises too high; stay close to chronic biters. <b><u>Never</u></b> bite a child to show how it feels to be bitten.</p>
<p><b>chewing fingers, rooting/moving mouth, fussy</b></p>	<p>Infant may be hungry or teething. Make eye contact with him during feeding. Provide teething rings that are cooled and placed within easy reach for you to give children when they are needed.</p>
<p><b>climbing on tables</b></p>	<p>Provide appropriate places to climb such as stairs, lofts, and couches. Model ways to ask for, or climb to objects out of child's reach. Say "no" sparingly, redirect instead. Save "no" for dangerous situations so it will be more effective.</p>
<p><b>clinging/ crying</b></p>	<p>Give empathy and acknowledge child's feelings. Use words to name the feeling - ex. "I see you are sad." Offer access to your lap; reassure the child that he is okay and that you will help him; Interact with the child. Make eye contact, talk to him by name, sing, smile, coo, and laugh. Include an object you know the child is fond of or brought from home to help in times of crisis or transition. Encourage families to leave photos of themselves with you to display at your program. Visit the photos during stressful times. Allow children to carry the photo if that reassures them.</p>
<p><b>cooing, babbling, smiling, hand to mouth near face</b></p>	<p>Interact with child. Make eye contact, talk to him by name, sing, smile, coo, laugh, mimic him, and say "You are special." Exaggerate your facial expressions.</p>
<p><b>kicking toys or children</b></p>	<p>Play games that require marching and stomping. Offer balls to kick for outdoor play; and clearly express that it is not acceptable to kick others. Help supply language to children who are kicking for attention or to resolve conflict. Remind children to use their words to get help, model sign language when appropriate. Show children how to use their hands to get out or put away toys.</p>

Behavior	Tip
<b>pinching</b>	Offer more self-feeding practice, more small-muscle experiences, and words to say “hello.” Demonstrate using gentle hands and soft strokes. Even though she won’t understand completely, explain that pinching hurts. <b>Never</b> pinch a child to show how it feels to be pinched. Children may enjoy taking off and putting clothespins on their clothing, on the edge of a container, or on the stuffed animal. Through observation, try to figure out why the child is pinching. Is it for attention? Experimentation? In defense of themselves?
<b>pulling hair</b>	Role model gentle touching on you, dolls, and a stuffed animal. Repeat vocabulary to help connect with other children, and offer cause-and-effect toys. Share your feelings when he pulls your hair. <b>Never</b> pull hair to show how it feels to for hair to be pulled.
<b>rubbing eyes/ ears, fussing</b>	Infant/toddler maybe is tired. If he rubs his eyes or ears often, inform parent or guardian. Watch for other symptoms of illness. Occasionally check if the infant/toddler can hear sounds in your environment.
<b>running indoors</b>	Designate a safe place to run outdoors, plan a course together at a park, and encourage marching for indoors instead of running. Plan and use an indoor obstacle course that includes crawling, stepping over, going around, going under, etc. Emphasize the concepts/words as the children complete each task.
<b>screaming indoors</b>	Be sure every child has an opportunity to be heard everyday. Sometimes a loud voice is used to gain attention or a turn to speak. Provide vocal experiments, such as singing in a bucket or talking into a microphone. Record and playback her expressions. Make sure children get outside to run and be loud everyday, as weather permits. Play listening, whispering games - talking into a cardboard tube or two funnels attached to a tube with duct tape.
<b>spilling beverage</b>	Present pouring and dumping activities at your sensory table. Provide small pitchers that are half full for practice in pouring. Mark a small plastic pitcher with a tape line to show how far to fill it. Check your table for level, even surfaces, with plenty of room for the toddler –they use wide arm movements and are still learning to refine motor movements. Reinforce language to say “all done.” Utilize sign language you have taught the children or could teach them -“help” and “thank you.”
<b>throwing heavy toys</b>	Offer soft things to throw indoors, into buckets, wastebaskets or other containers. Draw a circle, rectangle, or triangle with tape on a carpet or area rug to use as a target. Use simple, clear language to communicate limits about what can be thrown; and offer a variety of balls for outdoor play. Model appropriate tossing of beanbags, balls, pillows to the targets. Emphasize how you are holding the item, aiming, and tossing. If possible, enlist older children to take turns with younger children. Reinforce positive behavior with specific remarks -“you hit the target, great!” or “Let’s all try one more time, we are getting closer!”
<b>whining</b>	Provide words to communicate in a quiet, calm voice. Repeat what the child is saying and encourage him/ her to say it like you do. Avoid talking with other adults about a toddler’s challenging behavior in front of the child.